



You're Sad, Then I'll "Like" Computer-mediated communication (CMC) perspective

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Abstrak

Kata kunci:

Dakwah Islam,
Algoritma
TikTok, dan
Dakwah Digital

Komunikasi termediasi komputer (CMC) pada dasarnya terwakili oleh teks. Teks yang ada dalam interaksi tersebut tidak hanya menampilkan pesan yang akan disampaikan, melainkan juga terkandung makna dari ekspresi sebagaimana halnya ekspresi dalam komunikasi tatap muka. Namun, kehadiran Facebook sebagai situs jejaring sosial dan ikon "Like" yang termuat dalam kolom komentar memberikan arah baru dari pemaknaan emosi terhadap interaksi yang terjadi. Tidak seperti emoticon yang mewakili secara jelas atau setidaknya mendekati emosi lawan bicara, ikon "Like" di Facebook tidak seanehngas mewakili makna "Suka" terhadap status atau situasi yang diungkap oleh entitas tersebut. Ikon "Like" bertransformasi menjadi teks yang bebas makna dimana mengharuskan entitas di internet memaknai ikon tersebut secara bebas pula.

Abstract

Keywords:

Facebook,
Meaning,
Interaction,
Wall, Like

Computer mediated communication or CMC is essentially represented by the text. Text in the interaction is not only displays the message to be delivered, but also embodied the meaning of the expression as well as expression in the face to face communication. However, the presence of Facebook as social networking sites and iconic "Like" or Like Button in the comment section to give a new direction of the emotional meaning of the interactions that occur. Do not like emoticons representing expressly or at least close to the other person's emotions, iconic "Like" on Facebook is not explicitly represent the meaning of "Likes" of the status or situation revealed by the entity. Iconic "Like" transformed into a free text meaning which requires an entity on the internet make sense of these icons are free as well.



INTRODUCTION

When I published a status on Facebook about the condition of my first child who was hospitalized because his left hand was fractured, not long after that status was followed by dozens of comments. All the comments had the same tone: asking and praying. Asking how it happened or how it was going. Also, praying that he would be healed quickly. However, at the same time I also saw on the Facebook status that there were dozens of friends who liked my status; seen from the number of "Like" icons. I am sure they consciously pressed the Like button on my comment. The problem is, do those who like it really feel happy in the midst of my confusion thinking about my child's fate? Are they that happy knowing that my child has suffered misfortune? Or are they really interested, as the denotative meaning in the explanation above, in the misfortune?

In my mind, what I was going through was probably nothing. Some time ago, I found another friend of mine posting a sad status on her Facebook page. The status reported that her child had died even though she had only been born a few days ago. In addition to comments expressing condolences, I also saw that there were dozens or even hundreds of people who also clicked the "Like" button.

Another incident also made me unable to interpret "Like" as the denotative meaning of "like" as it is. This happened to two of my friends, one of whom likes the Barcelona football club and the other Real Madrid. Once Barcelona-Real Madrid competed in the Spanish League competition; the match could be said to be special because the winner of the match was certain to take home the Spanish League title for the 2011/2012 season. Long story short, Real Madrid managed to win 2-1 against Barcelona and the friend who idolized Real Madrid made a status of his happiness over the result. Well, not long after that I found traces that the friend who liked the Barcelona club, which was certainly a tough competitor, had actually clicked the "Like" button on the status of the Real Madrid fan. I wondered if the "Like" in question was a sign of being happy for Real Madrid's victory and a moment later I also doubted how he could be happy while the Barcelona club he loved suffered a defeat.

In its official statement, the Facebook developers explained the "Like" button as:

To improve your experience and promote consistency across the site, we've changed the language for Pages from "Fan" to "Like". We believe this change offers you a more light-weight and



standard way to connect with people, things and topics in which you are interested. (Why did "Become a Fan" change to "Like"? accessed from: <http://www.facebook.com/help/?faq=146777918726871#Why-did-%22Become-a-Fan%22-change-to-%22Like%22?>)

Facebook developer explanation indicates that the emergence of the “Like” button is basically interpreted as user interest in the published topic, whether it is in the status comment column (wall), image comments, pages, groups, or on advertisements. According to the context of this article, the “Like” that will be discussed is focused on the “Like” button on the status comment or published image.

Computer Mediated Communication, Forms and Content

The presence of computers and various software that mediate communication or computer mediated communication (CMC) between entities, basically has an influence on the content of the communication itself. Historically, in 1971 Ray Tomlinson conducted an experiment sending messages (now known as e-mail or electronic mail) between computers (Baron, 2008:12). In sending text messages between computers, Ray, a computer expert working at Bolt Beranek and Newman, uses the @ symbol to differentiate and also as a marker for the two computers he uses. The @ symbol is used to provide the identity of the sender/user which is separated from the login name when entering the system from the computer (Campbell, 1998 dalam Baron, 2008:12). Currently, the @ symbol is standard to indicate that the entity has an email identity and what email provider or service is used, for example kennajmi@gmail.com.

Polkosky (2008:34) emphasizes three basic characteristics that make it important to discuss the influence of technology on interpersonal communication, especially in CMC. First, several definitions and theories of interpersonal communication that exist were formulated long before computer technology emerged. Second, emerging technologies such as computers, mobile phones, or gadgets are complex interaction devices or subjects. Third, the characteristics of these new media ultimately give rise to communication habits that are different from face-to-face communication; this condition needs to be the focus of researchers' attention to see how communication behavior occurs (Wickens&Hollands, 2000 dalam Polkosky, 2008:35; Crystal, 2004:17).



New media for Jordan (2009) provides much more personal information (identity fluidity) compared to traditional media in general. If in the real world new personal information is revealed along with the intensity and interaction between entities (See Mead, 1934; Altman&Taylor, 1987; Berger, 1988), while in interactions on the internet information becomes so much open. Entities sometimes do not need to meet either in the real world or in the virtual world to know the identity of a particular entity on the internet. For example, I can find out someone's profile by simply opening their Facebook profile page; through this social network I can get personal identity information, images of the account owner and people close to him, hobbies, interests, and even know how the account owner feels. In addition, the integration between social networking sites and mobile phones or gadgets allows entities to access and publish their information at that time.

The development of technology that mediates communication not only has an influence on the technical diversity of communication media, but also provides differences and/or developments in the communication text itself. *"the transdisciplinary field that uses a variety of symbols, strategies, and techniques to assist people who unable to meet their communication needs through natural speech and/or writing"* (Lloyd et al., 1997). Bahkan Holmes (2005:3-6) emphasizes that in new media (second media age) communication is not only limited to focusing on discussing the media form per se, but also on discussing the content contained therein, including language.

Text in Interaction on the Internet

Text (or symbols) is a medium that represents the communication process via the internet. Although today's advances in communication technology have allowed entities to interact via voice or visuals, for example via Skype services, text is the basis of computer-mediated communication.

The use of text and the development of the text itself can be seen from the communication model of real-time communication or chatting (in the division according to Trevor Barr, 2000:118), for example mIRC. Internet Relay Chat or IRC is a communication facility between entities that first appeared in 1988. Communication that occurs in the internet interaction space is a communication that is *"synchronous, multi-user, text-based chat*



technology" (Thurlow *et.al*, 2004: 182). It is through IRC that the text becomes a symbol of a certain meaning that has undergone such development. The term A/S/L symbolizes a question about the age, sex, or location of the entity (p. 53).

Next, text is also a representative of an entity's emotions in communicating on the internet; known as an emoticon derived from the words emotion and icon. A feeling of happiness in an internet conversation text can simply be represented by combining two punctuation marks: and) to become :). Thus, the text :) is interpreted as a happy icon. If we look at the typology of face-to-face interaction, communication occurs by requiring the presence of both parties in real time and there is a sharing of reference systems between them even for a short time and only partially, temporal-spatial. In this communication, participants can use what is called deictic expressions such as when, where, this, that, and so on. Meanwhile, in mediated interaction between communicating entities, they cannot exchange what was previously called the same spatial-temporal reference system and also cannot guarantee whether the diactic expressions can be understood by the other party.

In relation to computer-mediated interaction and text as the basis of communication that occurs, Marc A Smith (1995) provides important aspects of communication on the internet. *First, CMC is acorporeal because it is primarily a text-only medium. Interactions that occur through computer networks are basically represented by text.* Second, CMC is astigmatic, that interactions that occur tend to ignore stigma against certain individuals, because communication based on this text is very little able to display visual images—including emotions, expressions, or intonation—of a person compared to communication through face-to-face. Holmes (2005:33) states that each individual experiences an increase in interacting with computer screens, building face-to-screen relationships compared to face-to-face.

The Internet has even connected billions of individuals from all over the world in a new space that has implications for the way we think so far, even for the concept of self-identity. (Turkle, 1995 & 1984). In today's internet era when we talk about virtual communities, we participate with other people from all over the world, people who are involved in conversations all the time, even with people we have intimate relationships with, but these people are very likely to never meet physically. Although the mother



tongue of the connected entities is different, text becomes a universal icon. This text can be the language of the internet that is recognized as a language or symbol/icon that is understood equally by all entities connected to the internet. This is what for Meyrowitz (1985:7) In his book *No Sense of Place*, electronic media brings changes to what is called the 'sense of place' and space (the spatial).

According to Castells (2009) In a network society, information becomes content exchanged between entities that are not in the separation between sender and receiver. Entities have a dual role as consumers of information and also producers of that information. Even in increasingly diverse communication channels and communication models that are also increasingly influenced by new media technology, entities have even transformed into creative audiences. (Castells, 2009:127). This means that face-to-face communication requires a common perception of the meaning of the codes produced between entities. This condition causes entities, both as senders and receivers, to require the same understanding of the codes in communication. While in a network society, entities have the authority to produce text (code).

The potential for the audience to take charge of its communicative practices has increased substantially with the related developments of the culture of autonomy and the rise of mass self-communication. ...the diffusion of the internet and of wireless communication supports and strengthens the practices of autonomy, including user-produced content that is uploaded on the web. (Castells, 2009:129)

The term mass self-communication that Castells put forward can basically be represented from how the text is produced and consumed simultaneously by the entity concerned. Like the "Like" button, on the one hand the clicked icon denotatively signifies the meaning of "like" the status or image that is published, but on the other hand the meaning of "Like" can have various meanings and is only known by the person who clicks the button.

Various Expressions of "Like"

Through surveys and virtual ethnography from Hine (2000), the author found the phenomenon of the meaning of "Like" that occurs in the virtual world. The phenomenon is



focused on the meaning and or reasons why users click the "Like" button in the comments column on Facebook, namely 1) liking, 2) agreeing, 3) sharing feelings, 4) expressing sympathy, and 5) leaving a trace.

The "Like" button on Facebook can be interpreted as meaning that the user likes the status or image that is published.

I give "Like" to statuses of friends who rarely appear or to close friends because not all statuses appear on my home page. In addition to maintaining friendship, it also means that I read what is written. For pictures, it is usually because I like them. (Interview with the owner of <http://www.facebook.com/lilySiti>)

Another meaning of the "Like" button is that the user agrees with the status or image published on Facebook. Usually for statuses that are social criticism, upholding justice, or even views on reality or political issues.

Depends on the context of the sentence. Usually for statuses that criticize the behavior of public officials I often give a "Like". That means I agree with my friend's status and added information from the mass media also strengthens what is in the status. (Interview with the owner of <http://www.facebook.com/mappajarungi>)

Not only is it an external reality, Facebook is also a medium for expressing internal reality. Realities such as family members having birthdays, moving up a class, or getting gifts are realities of the self that are displayed on Facebook status. In this situation or reality, the "Like" button can be interpreted as sharing feelings.

Usually, I click the "Like" button for positive statuses only. Especially those that contain motivational content or achievements that someone has achieved. (Interview with the owner of <http://www.facebook.com/rwdodo>)

Facebook users often express their feelings or sad events that they experience. In addition, statuses or images on Facebook also often inform about humanitarian events, natural disasters, and so on. This condition is where the "Like" button is interpreted as an expression of sympathy for the condition.

If the status invites sympathy, for example an area experiencing an earthquake or flood, of course I will "Like" it. But if it has the potential for conflict, I won't. (Interview with the owner of <http://www.facebook.com/radinalmukhtarhrp>)



The “Like” icon can also be interpreted as a trace of an entity in someone’s Facebook space. This means that the entity has no motivation or emotional involvement in the status of the Facebook owner, but only as a sign that the entity read the status and has established a friendship with the account owner.

Just to exist. Usually, for this, the person who posts the status is a famous person like a famous writer, artist, and so on. So that the famous person knows that they are friends with me. (Interview with the owner of <http://www.facebook.com/curlygeulis>)

These are the meanings of the “Like” symbol on Facebook. The meaning basically depends on the Facebook user themselves in responding to the status of other Facebook users. However, the meaning is still a communication to oneself and is still limited to being interpreted by others; in this case, Facebook users whose status is marked by the number of clicks on the “Like” button certainly cannot reach the true meaning of each entity that clicks.

“Like” as a Technological Apparatus

The “Like” button on Facebook is a technological “apparatus” in cyber culture. “Like” indicates that there is a feeling that follows the status situation that is being published by the Facebook owner. “Like” can no longer be interpreted as just liking as in face-to-face conversations or in the language dictionary that we have known so far. “Like” can mean anything and requires interpretation from the owner of the status and not from the person who gave the “Like”.

It is clear that the conditions that occur in the virtual world are very different compared to what happens in face-to-face communication. That in face-to-face communication the recipient of the message does not interpret too many verbal or nonverbal signs transmitted by the message maker. Even if there is a double meaning, it is greatly helped by confirmation between the two. This is not the case in the virtual world.

Borrowing the term used by James E. Katz and Mark A. Aaklus, that the change of meaning and expression in the internet world can be said to be apparatgeist; a combination of technology or apparatus and mind or geist. That the current communication technology between entities can be said to determine how communication including the content and text that appears in it is built in the interaction which can be different compared to



communication in the real world; “influences both the designs of the technology as well as the initial and subsequent significance accorded by users, nonusers, and antiusers” (Katz and Aaklus, 2002:305). That in cyber culture, both aspects of technology itself are tied to individual and collective aspects of social customs. *"That is, the cultural situation and the limitations of extant technology determine individual behavior, which also takes place within a group or collective"* (Katz and Aaklus, 2010:65).

A "Like" button now only represents the "Like" itself from the message creator. It depends on how we interpret the "Like". However, the meaning is always linear or related to the self-disclosure displayed on the Facebook wall. If the status is mourning, then the meaning of "Like" is also mourning. Furthermore, if the status is happy, then "Like" means that the friend also likes what is happening.

This is what Manuel Castell emphasized. That in today's network society, a meaning (read: culture) can emerge and be reinterpreted because of the interaction between members or entities in the network. Although entities connected on the internet come from the real world and have differences at least in terms of demographics, the interactions that occur and technology cause the cyber world to have its own culture.

It does not mean that technology determines individuals in creating culture. This is what Aaklus and Katz (2010:66-67) reject. Technology only provides choices for entities to display themselves on Facebook status. Like a menu in a cafeteria, in the example of Aaklus and Katz, that the menu does not force us to take everything, but can choose according to the desired taste.

So, one of the characteristics in the virtual world related to the status "Like" is that the meaning is not created by the message maker, but is created entirely by the message recipient. On the other hand, "Like" makes it easy for technology users to express feelings and represent the user's thoughts that cannot be written through words.



CONCLUSION

"Like" which was originally a sign that an entity was interested in a particular discussion or topic on Facebook, has actually experienced a shift in meaning. The phenomenon of the "Like" button is basically a form of communication culture that occurs in the current digital era. The meaning of an icon can no longer be assumed to be interpreted the same by other entities. Technology has given entities the freedom to produce a text and at the same time interpret the text in a context according to the entity's wishes.

This phenomenon also confirms Bell's (2007) thesis on the development of cyberculture. Through an experiential stories approach, Bell sees the internet as a medium for entity interaction. Computers are not only interpreted as an invasion of technological devices that have not only penetrated the academic world in schools and universities, but can now be used at home through personal computers (PCs) alone, but have 'transformed' into something that suits its users; the presence of software is able to bridge user interaction with computers. Computers can also represent themselves based on who accesses them.

The interconnectedness between entities globally causes cultural exchanges to occur. According to Castells (2009), this cultural exchange is different from exchanges in the real world where social class structures or power still dominate the production of culture itself. The Internet provides freedom for the production of meaning (culture) and makes entities free to produce culture as well as consume culture itself (Castells, 2001).

The question is not how the text develops or whether the progress of new media has an impact on the destruction of the language (text) used so far, because naturally language always develops along with human interaction, whether mediated by technology or not. The important question is how technology can be as maximally a medium in this interaction. This is the fundamental question raised by Turing (1950:442 dalam Polkosky, 2008:40), "*what capabilities a machine must exhibit to reliably fool human perception*". The language and meaning of a text on the internet will evolve into a global language or will not only be able to be interpreted by entities within certain geographical boundaries.



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